DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 283 991 CE 047 687

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TITLE Promotion and Implementation of TCDC by APSDEP.
PUB DATE May 87
NOTE 6p.; Paper presented at the Regional Workshop on Technical Teacher Training (Chiba City, Japan, May 11-22, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Consultation Programs; Cooperative Planning; *Developing Nations; Educational Cooperation; Foreign Countries; Information Networks; Information Transfer; Linking Agents; Postsecondary Education; *Regional Cooperation; *Regional Planning; Secondary Education; Shared Resources and Services; *Technical Assistance; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Asia (Southeast); *Pacific Islands

ABSTRACT

The concept of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) was adopted by the Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme (APSDEP) to accomplish the following: (1) to provide a way for developing countries to share their resources and experience with one another in order to increase and improve development assistance; (2) to serve as a means of exploring the possibilities or advantages of regional and inter-regional development; and (3) to serve as an alternative for the formulation and implementation of the governments' development policies, programs, and projects. TCDC was introduced into the United Nations system by its General Assembly in 1972. The concept received further recognition and support at international conferences held in 1978 and 1983, and in 1984 the APSDEP endorsed the policy of using national funds to support countries' participation in TCDC. The APSDEP's TCDC activities are implemented according to a rolling six-year plan that includes the work programs of its lead institutions in five countries in the Southeast Asia-Pacific region. These activities fall into the broad categories of research and development, group or individual training, consultation services, and information exchange. Networking is another TCDC mode that can address a wide range of problems, and two of the APSDEP's lead institutions are devoted to trainer training. APSDEP acts as a clearinghouse and linking agent between sending and receiving countries. (MN)

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PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TCDC BY APSDEP

by
Rony V. Diaz*

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I. BACKGROUND

APSDEP was established by the Labour Ministers of Asia and the Pacific to serve as an instrument of inter-country collaboration and co-ordination in vocational training; to be a forum for the examination and resolution of issues in vocational training that are common to the countries of the region; to be the vehicle for the collection and dissemination of training materials, information, experience; and to promote greater use of available training resources in Asia and the Pacific.

APSDEP operates through a network of designated focal points in member countries which undertake co-operative actions in research and development and training. These focal points are national organisations that are responsible for vocational training in their respective countries. APSDEP is guided by a tripartite Policy and Programme Committee that meets annually. The statute of APSDEP is in Annex 1.

II. TCDC

In addition to the focal points, the APSDEP network includes lead institutions. These are national training institutions that have agreed to undertake some of the technical work of APSDEP, particularly staff training and research, under the guidance of the APSDEP Central Office using the modality of technical co-operation among developing countries or TCDC.

Apart from enhancing self-reliance, the purposes of TCDC are: (a) to provide a way for developing countries to share their resources and

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experiences with one another with a view to increasing and improving development assistance; (b) to serve as a means of exploring the possibilities or advantages of regional and inter-regional development; (c) to be an alternative modality for the formulation and implementation of the governments' development policies, programmes and projects.

The General Assembly of the United Nations introduced TCDC into the United Nations system in 1972.

A UNDP-sponsored World Conference on TCDC took place in Buenos Aires in 1978 which resulted in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the establishment of an inter-governmental review mechanism on TCDC.

TCDC was further supported by the Asian and Pacific Labour Ministers in their Conference in Tokyo in 1983. Their recommendation was to establish a TCDC fund in order to finance the activities of the regional projects of the ILO, including APSDEP.

The idea of using national IPFs to finance a country's participation in the activities of APSDEP was discussed and endorsed by the Policy and Programme Committee of APSDEP in Jakarta in 1984. Each country, it is hoped, in accordance with its requirements and area of interest, will allocate a certain portion of its IPF to be used to send participants to APSDEP-sponsored seminars, workshops, training courses, etc.; to sponsor fellows to the lead institutions; to finance the operation of the lead institutions; and to participate in research and development activities.

A model of TCDC project document was prepared and circulated to participating countries for their use. India used this model for a TCDC project proposal which is awaiting approval by UNDP to upgrade the equipment and personnel of the lead institutions in Madras and Bangalore and to finance the training in these institutions of persons from other countries.

APSDEP's activities are implemented according to a rolling six-year plan which includes the work programme of the lead institutions. The activities of the lead institutions fall into four broad categories: (i) research and development; (ii) group or individual training; (iii) consultancy services; and (iv) exchange of information. At present, APSDEP has five lead institutions: the Advanced Vocational Training Institute in Madras, India; the Foremen Training Institute in Bangalore, India; the National Industrial Training and Trade Certification Board in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; the National Manpower and Youth Council in Manila, the Philippines; and the Fiji National Training Council in Suva, Fiji.

Implementation of the work plans of the lead institutions commenced in 1986 with fellowships/study tours for the concerned technical personnel to update their expertise in various technical fields. The training programmes were organised and financed by Japan. Japan is helping APSDEP promote TCDC.

III. NETWORKING

Another TCDC mode of APSDEP is networking. Networks develop because institutions decide that problems can be solved more

effectively, more quickly and at less cost through co-operative than through individual action. Information networks are set up to address a range of problems, including loans, cataloguing, document delivery, training, provision of factual answers to questions, referral and programmes for joint acquisition.

Institutions establishing networks or participating in networks have to identify their needs which could be met through networking; seek consensus with potential partners; identify objectives jointly with partners; spell out programme activities to meet objectives; define rules and guidelines; cost programme activities; convince management of the benefits of participation; identify co-ordinating units; and monitor and evaluate activities.

An information network, based on mutual benefit, can enhance the information resources available to each participating partner.

The information network of APSDEP is called APSDIN. It is composed of national documentation centres and is co-ordinated by the APSDEP Documentation Centre. The role of the national documentation centres is to provide information materials to the central data base in Islamabad which in turn provides information products such as accession lists, documentation bulletins, national bibliographies, etc. As the central co-ordinating agency, the APSDEP Documentation Centre also develops standards and procedures in close consultation with the national documentation centres for the use of the network.

IV. TCDC IN TRAINER TRAINING

Of the five lead institutions established to date, two are devoted to trainer training. The programmes of the Advanced Vocational Training Institute in Madras and of the Fiji National Training Council

in Suva, have been suitably organised to meet the trainer training needs of APSDEP member countries. They offer the following programmes: skill upgrading, pedagogy and administration. The duration of the instructor programmes varies from two weeks to one year. Where necessary, programmes can be tailor-made to suit the client.

These lead institutions were selected on the basis of their demonstrated competence in trainer training, their willingness to accept trainees from other countries, their accessibility in terms of location, language, and method of training, and their compatibility to the socio-cultural environment of their sub-regions.

Under this arrangement it is expected that the cost of training will be shared between the sending and receiving countries. The sending country is expected normally to meet the cost of international travel. The lead institution is expected to meet all or some of the local costs, i.e. tuition, books, accomodation, meals and pocket allowance. TCDC in trainer training also provides for the exchange of experts between institutions.

Through APSDIN, training materials and current information on trainer training can be provided systematically to national institutions undertaking trainer training.

V. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF APSDEP IN TCDC?

APSDEP acts as a clearing house and provides a linkage between the sending and receiving countries. APSDEP expects member countries to identify their own training needs and decide which components may be met through TCDC. Such a need is then conveyed to APSDEP which makes the necessary arrangements to suit individual institutional or national needs.

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30.4.1987